

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, US, IN

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORT OF INDIAN DESIRE TO PURCHASE U.S.
ARMS

1. NEW YORK TIMES MARCH 4 CARRIES PIECE BY WEINRAUB
REPORTING THAT INDIAN MILITARY IS QUIETLY DISCUSSING
PURCHASES OF AMERICAN ARMS. FULL TEXT HAS BEEN SENT TO
NEW DELHI ALREADY BY USINFO.

2. NEW DELHI COMMENT ON WEINRAUB STORY REQUESTED ASAP.
IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT HE IS REFERRING TO LONG-STANDING
INTEREST OF INDIAN MILITARY (BUT NOT GOI POLITICAL
LEVELS) IN POSSIBLY PROCURING, AND OF U.S. COMPANIES IN
SELLING, VARIOUS TYPES OF U.S. EQUIPMENT. (FYI: BOEING
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REPS HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH US MARCH 5 TO DISCUSS

POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING TO INDIANS RECONFIGURED BOEING 707 AS ASW AND OCEAN RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WHICH IS PRESENTLY ONLY IN PLANNING STAGE.)

3. DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED AND HAS USED FOLLOWING GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC INQUIRIES: WE HAVE RECEIVED NO REQUEST OR EXPRESSION OF OFFICIAL INTEREST IN ARMS PURCHASES BY GOI UNDER NEW ARMS POLICY ANNOUNCED FEB. 24.

AS WE STATED AT THAT TIME AND SINCE, THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO LIFT THE EMBARGO ON EXPORT OF LETHAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT APPLIES TO INDIA AS WELL AS TO PAKISTAN.

4. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT REGULAR PRESS BRIEFING MARCH 4.

Q: DOES THE UNITED STATES HAVE ANY INDICATION AT ALL OF INDIAN INTEREST IN PURCHASING ARMS UNDER THE LIFTED EMBARGO?

A: NO, WE HAVE HAD NO OFFICIAL REQUEST, NO OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH REGARD TO THAT STORY.

Q: HAVE YOU HAD ANY INDICATION WHATSOEVER? I WASN'T ASKING ABOUT AN OFFICIAL REQUEST.

A: TO MY KNOWLEDGE, WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATION FROM INDIAN OFFICIALS AT ANY LEVEL OF THIS INTEREST THAT YOU REFER TO.

Q: BOB, HOW WOULD THE UNITED STATES REGARD A REQUEST FROM INDIA FOR ARMS?

A: WELL, I THINK IT WAS ROY ATHERTON WHO SAID--AND I BELIEVE THE SECRETARY ALSO MENTIONED IT IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE--ANY REQUEST FROM INDIA WOULD BE LOOKED AT ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, JUST AS ANY REQUEST FROM PAKISTAN WOULD BE LOOKED UPON ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.

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Q: BOB, ON INDIA, I DON'T REALLY KNOW EXACTLY HOW THIS WORKS. OF COURSE WE ALL KNOW YOU NEED THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL BEFORE YOU CAN BUY WEAPONS FROM AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS. HOWEVER, CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER YOU KNOW OF ANY CONTACTS BETWEEN INDIAN OFFICIALS AND AMERICAN ARMS MANUFACTURERS AT ANY LEVEL?

A: I CANNOT ANSWER THAT. I AM UNAWARE OF ANY. BUT THIS

IS SOMETHING THAT MAYBE THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT MIGHT
HAVE MORE INFORMATION THAN I HAVE. I AM UNAWARE OF ANY.

Q: BUT YOU ARE UNAWARE OF ANY?

A: YES, SIR.

Q: THE DEPARTMENT IS UNAWARE.

A: THE DEPARTMENT IS UNAWARE OF ANY. KISSINGER

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